KNYSNA REMEMBERS THE FIRES
OF JUNE 2017

Words could never express our gratitude to the heroes of, or pay tribute to all those affected by the devastating fires of 7 June 2017. In remembering all those involved, the municipality unveiled a commemorative statue outside the municipal finance building in Queen Street.

In his address at the unveiling, Knysna Executive Mayor Mark Willemse commiserated with those who had suffered because of the disaster. “It is with a heavy heart that I join you on this very solemn occasion. The greater Knysna municipal area and the rest of the Garden Route still grieves with every family affected by the fire, especially those who lost loved ones.”

The astonishing efforts of local and national government, the private sector, residents, religious organisations and NGOs on that day has ensured that the town has managed to rise from the flames in the 12 months since the devastation.

The Knysna Municipality extends its heartfelt thanks to the brave firefighters and logistics experts, #KnysnaFireHeroes, volunteers and all the charitable donations that have been flooding into Knysna from across South Africa.

Executive Deputy Mayor Elrick van Aswegen presented the South African Military Health Services with a certificate of appreciation on Friday 15 June, for the provision of medical support during the disaster.

“Despite the profound losses, the resilience shown by the Knysna community is extraordinary,” said Municipal Manager Kam Chetty.

From left: Executive Deputy Mayor Elrick van Aswegen, Executive Mayor Mark Willemse, Speaker Georlene Wolmarans, Cllrs Mertle Gombo, Victor Molosi, Aubrey Tsengwa and Peter Myers.
Knysna’s 2018/19 budget was approved at a special meeting of Council held on Wednesday 6 June. The 2018/2019 budget amounts to approximately R1.029 002 billion, comprising of R150.742 million in capital expenditure and R878.261 million for operating expenses. This constitutes an increase of 2% on the adjusted budget for 2017/2018.

Critical capital projects include upgrades to the bulk water supply and addressing the water disruptions that have plagued the municipality over the last six years.

The approximated funds in the capital budget have been earmarked as follows:

- R10 million for housing and infrastructure, for the Vision 1393 UISP and Vision 459 in Nekkies, Oupad, Dam se Bos and Concordia;
- R70 million has been allocated for water and waste water infrastructure programmes, mainly for the Waste Water Treatment Works, as well as continuation of the Charlesford scheme;
- R17 million towards community and social services programmes, mainly NDPG grant in White Location for the multi-purpose centre, as well as the Hornlee Clubhouse;
- R24 million is allocated towards roads infrastructure, the Grey Street upgrade and the surfacing of gravel roads in eight different wards.

Environmental Management will receive R2 million for the eradication of alien vegetation. This labour intensive project will create much needed jobs and improve capacity building. The clearing of the alien vegetation will further reduce future fuel load for fire and enhance biodiversity.

Turning to the Operational Budget, revenue sources remain under strain. In an attempt to balance service delivery with affordability, the proposed tariff increases have been limited as follows:

- electricity 6.84%
- water 7.7%
- refuse 5.3%
- property rates 2.2% for residential/ domestic tariff.
Knysna's second Youth Council was inaugurated on 15 May. The Youth Council elected portfolio chairpersons and members to its disciplinary committee during its first meeting, held on 5 June.

The aims of the Youth Council are:
- to give the youth of Knysna a voice concerning civil matters;
- to promote leadership qualities, as well as a healthy interest in municipal, civil, administrative and community matters, within our youth;
- to organise projects (in line with the aims of the council) to the benefit of the community and especially the youth; and
- to promote better relationships between different language groups, while fostering mutual understanding and appreciation amongst the youth in the surrounding areas.

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Back row fltr: Ntombozuko Ntlanga (Portfolios: Skills Development and Education), Jason White (Disciplinary Committee), Shahida Sigula municipal Youth Coordinator, Sweetness Nzima (Portfolio: Tourism and Arts & Culture and Disciplinary Committee), Elmarie Maxim (Chairperson: Disciplinary Committee), Denver Danhausen (Secretary: Disciplinary Committee), Cllr Georlene Wolmarans, Speaker of Knysna Council and Amanda Godlwana (Portfolio: Social Development).

Front row fltr: Thembelani Ciko (Portfolio: Enterprise Development) and Divan Petersen (Portfolio: Sport Development).

Knysna Municipal Youth Desk hosted a world class music festival in celebration of Youth Day at Loerie Park on 16 June. The event was themed “Champions with a vision”.

Hundreds of young people from the greater Knysna municipal area attended the extravaganza. The jam-packed programme included local and national artists including DJ’s, poets, rappers, dancers and singers - great entertainment suitable for all attendees.

Artists included Knysna’s very own Ashley Miles (aka Arab) from Nekkies. Arab was ‘discovered’ during a talent search competition and is now booking events with other nationally recognised artists. Antonio Cleophas from Hornlee, another prodigy in the making, also took to the stage. National artists including Naakmusiq, Duncan Mthokozisi and Dangerflex were part of the entertainment line-up. The crowd enjoyed all the performances - especially those of our local artists.

Knysna Executive Mayor Mark Willemse encouraged the youth to be active in their own development and to capitalize on the opportunities provided to them by the municipality.
GREEN COLUMN
MUNICIPALITY STARTS THEIR BIO-WISE JOURNEY

Sue Swain, Executive Director of BioWise, facilitated a workshop at the Municipality on the Waste Nothing Knysna programme last week.

The Municipality recently pledged their support for the programme when they undertook to gradually transform the main municipal building into Knysna’s first fully bio-wise building. The workshop was attended by the newly appointed Municipal Champions of Change and other key personnel whose task it would be to drive this programme internally at the municipality.

The appointed Municipal Champions of Change are front (fltr): Sinetemba Mtwa (Corporate Services), Shane Rhode (Planning & Development), Natalie Salmons (Community Services), Sue Swain (BioWise) and Zoleka Gutas (MM Department). Back (fltr): Cllr Shakespeare Arends, Ndiphwe Naki (Electrical Services) and Randall Bower (Manager: Solid Waste).

Swain said that the first part of the workshop focused on discovering what it means to be earth-savvy with an interactive session on understanding the earth’s unique operating conditions and working out what strategies would be needed to thrive as a species. “Comparing these ‘savvy strategies’ to how we as humans are currently operating was something of an eye-opener. But even more so was discovering how other earthlings are doing things so much better and so much more wisely by looking at some of the energy-wise, waste-wise and water-wise strategies of plants, animals, microbes and whole ecosystems. The workshop ended with each champion being tasked with starting their own bottle brick and speaking to at least one other colleague to bring them on board, starting the flapping Flamingo effect within the municipality.”

At a follow-up workshop the “nuts & bolts” of how to translate those lessons into specific actions for the building and those working in it were discussed. There are five inter-related actions for each of the focus areas i.e. water, energy, waste and space and the starting point for all of them is ‘Know and Understand’. “To achieve this ‘knowing and understanding’, the initiatives we are starting with are developing and conducting in-house audits to determine current use of resources and related costs in order to establish the baseline against which targets can be set and savings measured. Accompanying this is a critically important educational campaign whereby all staff will discover exactly where and how the various resources they utilize come from and the impact of their use. The more we understand and the closer to home we bring things, the more we will be motivated to make the changes we need to start ‘wasting nothing’!”

ACCESS TO YOUR MUNICIPAL ACCOUNT IS NOW EVEN EASIER

Knysna Municipality is making it even easier for customers to view and pay their accounts. All you need to do is to download your account from: http://knysna.docview.co.za/

Use your municipal account number for both the user name and password. You can change your password after the first registration. A payment link to all major banks is also available and can be used by those customers who wish to pay their account online.

REMEmBER:
LEVEL 3 WATER RESTRICTIONS ARE STILL IN PLACE

The Western Cape is still in the midst of the worst drought since 2016, so remember to be water wise!